

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7208

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USIA FOR IEU

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, IT

SUBJECT: THE DC'S FAILING IMAGE: NON-CONTACTS WITH THE AMERICAN  
PRESS

SUMMARY; FAILURE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS TO APPRECIATE  
THE INFLUENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN PRESS IN THEIR  
CURRENT SITUATION HAS COST THEM INNUMERABLE OPPORTUNITIES  
TO PRESENT THEIR CASE TO THE WORLD'S MAJOR MEDIA, WHOSE  
STORIES ARE FREQUENTLY PLAYED BACK FULLY BY ITALIAN MEDIA.  
THIS SHORTSIGHTED PERFORMANCE CONTRASTS VIVIDLY WITH THE  
PCI, WHICH HAS SKILLFULLY BURNISHED ITS IMAGE AS RESPONSIBLE  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY THROUGH FREQUENT INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED  
SENIOR PARTY OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

1. DC OFFICIALS OCCASIONALLY COMPLAIN THAT THE AMERICAN  
PRESS IS "BIASED" IN ITS ITALIAN COVERAGE, ALWAYS FAVORING  
THE LEFT AND ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY ASSUMING THE WORST ABOUT  
THE DC. NOTWITHSTANDING FACT THAT THERE IS AMPLE OBJECTIVE  
EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO DOCUMENT DC SHORTCOMINGS, ONE  
ADDITIONAL FACTOR IS STRONGLY NEGATIVE IMPRESSION CREATED  
BY DC'S INEPT AND PROVINCIAL HANDLYING OF PRESS, CONTRASTED  
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WITH SKILLFUL AND RESPONSIVE PCI PUBLIC RELATIONS OPERATION.

FOLLOWING EXAMPLES ARE FEW OF MANY WHICH ILLUSTRATE PROBLEM:

2. NEWSWEEK CORRESPONDENT SPENT MANY MONTHS SEEKING INTERVIEWS WITH SENIOR DC OFFICIALS, INCLUDING MORO, ANDREOTTI, ZACCAGNINI. IN MEANWHILE, SHE HAD ACCESS TO VARIOUS PCI OFFICIALS AND REPORTED IN STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER WHAT THEY SAID. FINALLY, SHE INTERVIEWED ZACCAGNINI AND RESULT WAS SYMPATHETIC INTERVIEW IN NEWSWEEK (JANUARY 19) SHE INFORMED EMBOFF THAT DURING WAITING PERIOD SHE UNABLE EVEN DISCOVER NAME OF DC PRESS OFFICER AND OFFICE TELEPHONE. CALLS TO PCI ON OTHER HAND WERE ALWAYS EXPEDITIOUSLY HANDLED.

3. CYRUS SULZBERGER VISITED ROME MARCH 14-18 AND USED ALL CHANNELS AVAILABLE TO HIM TO OBTAIN INTERVIEW WITH PRIME MINISTER MORO WHO DECLINED TO SEE HIM. HOWEVER, HE HAD LONG SESSION WITH PCI SEVRETARY ENRICO BERLINGUER, WHO REPORTEDLY HAS 350 STANDING REQUESTS FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS. FOUR-PART SERIES ON ITALIAN SITUATION FILED BY SULZBERGER WAS COMPLIMENTARY OF BERLINGUER, CRITICAL OF DC. ARTICLES MIGHT HAVE FOLLOWED THIS PATTERN IN ANY CASE, BUT SULZBERGER REPORTEDLY WAS EXASPERATED AT MORO'S REFUSAL TO SEE HIM, ESPECIALLY WHEN HE HAS INTERVIEWED WORLD LEADERS FOR MANY YEARS.

4. LAST WEEK, JOSEPH KRAFT VISITED ITALY AND HAD A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE. AN ITALIAN JOURNALIST WITH GOOD CONNECTIONS WHO WAS ASSISTING KRAFT MAKE APPOINTMENTS TOLD EMBOFF THAT ATTITUDE OF MORO AND ZACCAGNINI WAS THAT "TO GRANT AN INTERVIEW TO A JOURNALIST, EVEN AN IMPORTANT AMERICAN, WOULD BE LIKE TALKING TO THE DEVIL INCARNATE." KRAFT DID TALK TO PCI OFFICIALS, AS HAVE OTHER JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE REQUESTED ACCESS ON SHORT NOTICE.

COMMENT: WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY URGED DC FIGURES AT ALL LEVELS TO RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR IMPROVED PUBLIC RELATIONS. THEIR REFUSAL TO ACT IN WHAT IS CLEARLY THEIR OWN INTERESTS, AND FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR IMAGE IN AMERICA, IS ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION OF PROVINCIALISM TO EVENTS OUTSIDE ITALY WHICH ARE NOT SEEN DIRECTLY TO AFFECT THEIR OWN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTERESTS, OFTEN NARROWLY CONSTRUED BY THEM.VOLPE

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**To:** STATE  
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